

Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls & Young Women (EPAG) Project

Childcare Guideline

Introduction

The Girls Vulnerability Assessment Report notes that *“given girls’ and young women’s family responsibilities, and high rates of adolescent motherhood, the project should provide some sort of formal or informal childcare arrangement.”*

There are several options for the provision of childcare services:

1. Direct delivery of the childcare services by training service providers,
2. Community-based informal childcare arrangements,
3. Vouchers/payments for private service providers, or
4. Childcare facilities in markets if training is provided in marketplaces.

The final choice will largely depend on the location of the project and the particular options available in the area. Currently, the existing general logistical challenges in the project communities and common inclination among service providers indicate that option one (1) above will be the preferred approach to provision of childcare.

Foremost, it is important to realize that the provision of childcare services is not intended to substitute existing traditional or community childcare and support systems. Hence, girls should be encouraged to continually use such services, unless where it is absolutely necessary to bring children to the training venue.

Criteria

Hence, to facilitate the provision of effective childcare services to trainees’ children, the following standards have been suggested for consideration by the service providers:

1. **Minimum Services that Constitute Childcare**
 - a. **First Aid:** The administration of pain killers such as aspirin, cleaning and bandaging of bruises and cuts sustained at the center, sponge bathing to control fever, etc.
 - b. **Sanitation:** Bathing and changing diapers for the kids
 - c. **Feeding:** This primarily entails helping the children eat food **PROVIDED BY THEIR MOTHERS**. Additionally, service providers could procure snacks, candies, cookies, etc. that could be shared with kids as a strategy to pacify them during their stay.

- d. **Protective Confinement:** Keeping the children, especially toddlers, within the secure environment of the training venues.

2. Eligibility for Admission of Children

- a. **Age Limits:** It is common for girls to be responsible for multiple children. Only children between the ages of 0 - 5 years will be admitted to the childcare services.
- b. **Number of Children:** Each girl will bring not more than two (2) kids.

Important Suggestions

The following suggestions have evolved from discussions held at the recent EPAG Working Session held on February 23 - 24, 2010.

- 1. **Childcare Giver Qualification:** Among other things, childcare givers should have some background or minimum training in First Aid or Nurse Aid
- 2. **Number of Childcare Givers per Venue:** Knowing what children are, and for the practical challenges of caring for them, it is advised that each center has minimum of two (2) staff responsible for childcare
- 3. **Salary:** Given the anticipated challenges and magnitude of the work load of childcare, and for the purpose of promoting standardization amongst service providers, it would be helpful to adopt a common payment structure for childcare givers - a minimum of US\$75.00 is being recommended.